

THE EFFECTS OF TRAINING/DEVELOPMENT ON THE PERFORMANCE OF PAINT MANUFACTURING FIRMS IN RIVERS STATE.

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ABSTRACT

The study assessed the effects of training/development on the performance of paint manufacturing firms in Rivers State. Relevant literatures were reviewed to provide the relevant theoretical background for the study. A cross-sectional survey research method was used in sampling the entire 312 operational staff of the three paint manufacturing firms in Rivers State. A research questionnaire was used in collecting the primary data while formulated hypothesis was tested using Pearson product moment correlation via statistical package for social sciences (SPSS 0.15). The major findings of the research include: paint manufacturing firms that invested substantially on training and development survived the operational difficulties in Rivers State while a sizeable number of workers have not received any form of training in their organizations due to managers' discriminatory nomination of workers for training/development programs. The research therefore recommends among others: paint manufacturing firms should expand their training/development programs to involve every worker and not only favoured ones, they should partner with the relevant government agencies to effectively control their identified operational problems like product adulteration and extortion by law enforcement agencies.

Keywords: Training/development, productive capability, organizational performance, innovativeness, productivity (output), effectiveness.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

It is generally believed that the most important way for an organization to prepare for the future is to train and develop its employees. It is the responsibility of managers to provide training and development opportunities for their staff so that they can reach their full potentials. Training is a learning activity that assist employees to perform their current jobs more efficiently while development refers to long-term future oriented programs that focuses on providing knowledge or skills within a specified area that is not necessarily job related(Wehrich and Koontz, 2005).

On the other hand, organizational performance is a measure of the results achieved. Performance should be measured since it helps to monitor employees and provide feedback information for management (Emeti, 2011). Organizational performance measurement as a key component of organizational development requires controls to be designed, installed and adjusted to fit the various operational basis of the firm, so that actual performance can be measured and deviations corrected (Obijiofor, 2002).

In Nigeria, some employers have a negative attitude towards training and development, seeing this all important practice as a waste of financial resources. Akanji and Bankole (2007) observed with regret that some employers think and believe that there are enough experienced workers in the labour market who do not need any training. Some other employers reluctantly embrace training, engaging only infrequently and/or on a small scale. Employees' attitude too are sometimes discouraging – some regard the period of training as a holiday or a time to have their share of the organization's 'cake', hence, they hardly participate actively.

It has also been observed, sadly though, that training and development programs in Nigeria are sometimes organized not for the purpose of equipping trainees with new knowledge and skills but for the ulterior motive of getting enough funds from the Industrial Training Funds (ITF) to share among those in charge of the training. ITF, was introduced by the Federal Government of Nigeria to, among other things, ensure that employees in the private sector train their workers.

Okpara and Wynn (2008) observed that most employees trained by organizations do not stay with the companies, noting that once they get the required skills they leave and join other organizations that offer them higher remuneration. This study therefore is an attempt to explore the effects of training/development on the performance of paint manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Any interested observer of the paint market in Nigeria in the recent past will easily discover the volatile nature of the business. Long existing paint manufacturing firms may suddenly go out of production and new ones emerge, but also go down soon afterwards. Competition grows very severe and sometimes becomes unhealthy and unethical. As it is now, one is led to conclude that paint manufacturing firms in Nigeria are facing difficult times. As an interested observer of the sector the researcher identified certain inconsistencies in the human resource development practices of the paint industry in Rivers State. The fact that some paint manufacturing firms are still using crude/unprofessional approach in their production process, raises a question as to whether the workers are abreast with modern skills and knowledge in the business. And what immediately comes to mind is training/development, how well exposed are the firms' workers to training and development, how relevant is the type of training the workers are given (if any) to the needs of their organizations, how regular are the training programs and most importantly, what effect(s) has whatever received training to the firms' overall performance.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

Deriving from the general objective of determining the effects of training and development on the performance of paint manufacturing firms in Rivers State, the specific objectives of the research include:

1. To ascertain whether workers in the paint manufacturing firms in Rivers State embark on any training/development programs.
2. To determine whether any significant positive relationship exists between training/development and organizational performance in paint manufacturing firms in Rivers State.

1.4 Research Questions

Despite the operational challenges of paint manufacturing firms in Rivers state, the relevance of training/development in the achievement of organizational goals cannot be over emphasized thus prompting the following research questions:

1. Do workers in the paint manufacturing firms in Rivers State embark on any training/development programs?
2. Does any significant positive relationship exist between training/development and organizational performance in paint manufacturing firms in Rivers State?

1.5 Research Hypotheses

In view of the above research questions, this null hypothesis was formulated:

H₀: There is no significant positive relationship between training/ development and organizational performance in paint manufacturing firms in Rivers State.

H₁: There is a significant positive relationship between training/development and organizational performance in paint manufacturing firms in Rivers State.

1.6 Literature Review

Any organization that lays little or no emphasis on training and development is encouraging the obsolescence of employees, encouraging inflexibility in the organization and appears not to recognize the changing environment in which it operates (Nwachukwu, 2009). Technological innovations taking place every day render today's skills and methods ineffective for tomorrow's activities. For this reason, therefore, one of the crucial functions of the executive and, of course, the human resource manager is to ensure that employees without the necessary skills are helped to acquire them, while those who do are helped to update them.

Although training and development aim at achieving one thing – to enhance the productive capabilities of a worker for the realization of organizational objectives - the distinction between the two concepts need be stated, at least, for academic reasons. Banjoko (2007) defined training as “an organized procedure by which people learn or acquire knowledge/skills for a definite purpose.” It is a process for equipping the new employees particularly the non-management employees with specific skills e.g. technical skills like plumbing, electrical wiring, repairing skills, clerical and typing skills that would enable them to improve on their performances and overall efficiency.

According to Gardner (1973) as in Banjoko (2007), the objective of job training is to enable an employee to perform his job in such a way as to meet the standards of output, quality, waste control, safety and other operational requirements. Similarly, development is used in relation to the process of helping managerial

employees who perform non-routine jobs to improve their managerial, administrative and decision-making abilities and competence. As earlier stated, development is long-term and future oriented.

In Nigeria, because of the fact that ours is a world that is currently undergoing rapid changes particularly in the area of skill obsolescence and technological capability, training is not exclusively reserved for newly employed staff but also for the old employees as well. It is therefore important, for the purpose of enhancing individual performance, thus training and development should be made a continuous process that should last throughout an employee's entire working life.

As to the importance of training and development, Banjoko (2007) stated that low and middle-level employees need to adapt to new skills and technologies while managers and top management personnel need deeper knowledge and understanding of their jobs, the jobs of others, a good understanding of where and how their jobs fit into the wider organizational pattern. An understanding of government and societal constraints and a sensitive social awareness of the environment within which the organization operates is also necessary.

Nwachukwu (2009) enumerated the purpose of employee training to include:

- Skill development
- Attitude modification
- To reduce employees' turn-over rate i.e. a trained employee is less likely to leave his job than one who is untrained.
- To make an employee feel that he/she is part of the establishment.
- Employee becomes an asset and also easier for management to control.

Identifiable methods of employee training in Nigeria include:

- a) On-the-Job training
- b) Apprenticeship training
- c) Off-the-Job training
- d) Classroom training
 - Conferences
 - Case study
 - Lectures
 - Role-playing
 - Programmed Instruction
 - Simulation

With all the advantages derivable from training and development the world over, it is sad to note that enough impact has not been made in Nigeria as a result of the following problems articulated by Nwachukwu (2006):

- The objective of the training program is not clearly stated to the participants.
- Some employees see some development programs as a few days off work that are meant for relaxation.
- There is no positive reinforcement after the training.
- Some of the programs are not related to employee needs for self-development and self-actualization.
- The company does not evaluate the outcome of the programs. There are in many instances, no examinations – written or oral or feedback.
- The employee does not have the opportunity to put what has been learnt into practice.
- Many management development programs are boring as the lecturers speak in general terms.
- There is the problem of transfer of learning as some of the concepts and principles taught are too academic and very difficult to apply in real situations.
- Many management development programs are not properly planned and there are no sequences to the courses offered from year to year.
- The consultants are not properly selected and do not adapt their lectures to suit specific organizational needs.
- There is inadequate support from the executives.

2. Research Methods

This study used a cross-sectional survey research approach in collecting primary data from the entire 312 operational staff of the three paint manufacturing firms in Rivers State. The 312 population of study does not include factory/casual workers who are engaged only to load and off-load paint products and raw materials as the need arises since they have no skills, basic education and are not permanent staff of the companies. To ensure reliability of the study, the population size of 312, was also used as the sample size while a pilot, test-re-test study was carried out to ensure validity of the research instrument.

A five-point rating scale (strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed, strongly disagreed and undecided) was used in the formulation of responses in the research questionnaire to accommodate a wide range of respondents opinions. The formulated hypothesis was tested using Pearson product moment correlation via statistical package for social sciences (SPSS 0.15). A total of 312 copies of the questionnaire were administered, out of which 6 were cancelled while 30 were not returned and 276 (88%) were used for the analysis. Organizational performance was mirrored in the study via innovativeness, productivity (output) and effectiveness of workers.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1: Workers Rating of Training/Development Practices on Performance and Measurement indices

Items	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1	UN 0	TOTAL	MEAN SCORE
1 Has the training/development programs of the company positively influenced business performance?	132 (528)	64 (192)	51 (102)	23 (23)	2 (0)	272 (845)	3.11
2 Have you benefited from the company's training/development programs?	85 (340)	79 (237)	56 (112)	48 (48)	8 (0)	276 (737)	2.67
3 Does the company's training/development programs as practiced, have positive influence on workers' innovativeness?	60 (240)	74 (222)	25 (50)	3 (3)	113 (0)	275 (515)	2.00
4 Has the training/development practices in your company increased workers total output?	40 (160)	30 (90)	10 (20)	5 (5)	190 (0)	275 (275)	1.00
5 Has workers effectiveness increased with the training/development programs they have been exposed to?	40 (160)	60 (180)	50 (100)	1 (1)	125 (0)	441 (725)	1.60
6 Has the training/development programs you have been exposed to, really addressed your training need areas in the company?	36 (144)	30 (90)	10 (20)	2 (2)	196 (0)	274 (246.60)	0.90
Grand Mean							1.88

Source: Field Survey

Table 1 shows that questions: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 with mean scores of 3.11, 2.67, 2.00, 1.00, 1.60 and 0.90 were slightly below the weighted average of 2.00. The grand mean of 1.88 shows that there is evidence of a significant relationship between training/development practices and organizational performance in the paint manufacturing firms in Rivers State. This conclusion is buttressed by the observation of Lopez et al., 2005 that increasing employees' abilities and motivation through training/development will ultimately improve organizational performance.

The conclusion is also supported by Lee and Bruvold (2003) observation that comprehensive training activities are positively associated with productivity; reduced staff intention to leave and organizational effectiveness. Obijiofor (2002) strongly corroborated this result by observing that "adequate training and staff development practices lead to cost reduction".

McKeon (2008) observed that "training/development of workers will ensure innovativeness and effectiveness of workers". What is certainly responsible for this situation is that paint manufacturing firms in Rivers State are faced with severe competition, and to survive, must keep abreast with modern technologies in the industry. This requires constant training and retraining of workers. The implication of this result is that paint manufacturing firms that played down on this all important HRM practice will not survive competition.

Training and development programs as presently practiced by paint manufacturing firms in Rivers State have positively influenced performance in these organizations. This is reflected in the innovativeness, productivity and effectiveness of workers as seen in Table 1. It is then apparent that training/development of workers have significant positive relationship with their performance.

The overall good performance of paint companies notwithstanding, it is sad to observe that a significant number of workers are yet to benefit from any kind of training/development programs in their companies. A disagree and strongly disagree with a total frequency of 104(56+48) out of 276 (Table 1 question 2) is disappointing, considering the importance of training and development to organizational success in the present highly competitive environment which paint manufacturing firms in Rivers State see themselves.

From the general comments of workers: where they were asked to comment freely on their problems, outside training/development, the following were revealed –

- discriminatory training, - only those favored by the manager are nominated
- adulteration of their paint products by quacks,
- high level of extortion on the highways by the law enforcement agencies; paint distribution should be done by road.

3.2 Hypothesis Testing

H₀: There is no significant positive relationship between training/ development and organizational performance in paint manufacturing firms in Rivers State.

H₁: There is a significant positive relationship between training/development and organizational performance in paint manufacturing firms in Rivers State.

Table 2: Pearson Correlation Coefficient of the relationship between training/development and organizational performance

		Organizational Performance	Training and Development
Organizational Performance	Pearson Correlation	1	0.713
	Sig.(1-tailed)	5	5

Source: Computation from SPSS 0.15

Table 3: Paired Sample Test of the relationship between training/development and organizational performance

	Paired Differences					t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Paired: Organizational Performance & Training/ Development	1.44400	.34158	.15276	1.01987	1.86813	9.453	4	.001

Source: Computation, from SPSS 0.15

From Table 2, it was observed that training/development as practiced by paint manufacturing firms in Rivers State has 71.30% (moderate) correlation with organizational performance, although it was not significant at 0.05 and 0.01 level of significance. However, from the t-statistic test in table 3, it was seen that t-test is 9.453 at a degree of freedom of 4 with a level of significance of 0.001. This implies that there is a significant relationship between training/development and organizational performance. The outcome of this test agrees with the alternate hypothesis that there is a significant positive relationship between training/development and organizational performance in paint manufacturing firms in Rivers State. Based on this result, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted.

3.3 Conclusion and Recommendations

Notwithstanding the operational difficulties of paint manufacturing firms in Rivers State, those firms that invested well on training and development are surviving. It is sad that managers who know the importance of focusing training on the need areas should be discriminatory in doing this. Arising from the findings of this paper, it is suggested that paint manufacturing firms in Rivers State should take the following measures to improve the gains from its current training and development programs:

- They should intensify and expand their training/development programs to a level where every worker is involved, and not only favoured ones. This will improve quality of staff that will ensure sustained organizational competitiveness.
- They should partner with their trade association and other relevant government agencies to check adulteration of their products and extortion encountered while moving their products on the highways.

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